

Impact of Poverty Reduction on Education: Analytical Study from the Perspectives of Rwanda and Sri Lanka

Gerard Bikorimana^{12*} W.K.D Keerthirathne³ Shengmin Sun¹

1.Centre for Economic Research, Shandong University, Jinan, Shandong Province, China. Postcode 250100

2.College of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Rwanda

3.Pasdunrata National College of Education, Kalutara, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Poverty is still a challenge in the development of education in underdeveloped countries in general and particularly in rural areas. Both Rwanda and Sri Lanka have been putting much effort into poverty reduction and achievements are observable. Although both countries put more effort in the education sector among other key priorities for development, an imbalance in access to education between rural and urban areas education still, is observable. Low access and high dropout are high in rural areas compared to urban areas. This paper articulates poverty reduction and its impact on education both in rural and urban areas that is, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. The study uses the secondary data from world development indicators of World Bank and other data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda and the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Education and Cultural Affairs in Sri Lanka. The results show that poverty had been considerably reduced in both countries, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, and also access to education in rural areas increased compared to earlier times. Even though the governments' emphasis on poverty reduction has positively impacted access to education both rural and urban areas in Rwanda and Sri Lanka. The challenges are still many and affect the quality of education in rural areas and in some parts of urban areas.

Keywords: Poverty reduction, Development, Education, Rural, Urban

1. Introduction

Both Sri Lanka and Rwanda are two developing countries located on two different continents, in Asia and Africa respectively, and make great efforts to achieve developmental factors in order to acquire a considerable poverty reduction in the competitive and technical oriented world.

Though Sri Lanka has reached a high level of literacy rate, above 91.2%, Rwanda's literacy level is somewhat lower than Sri Lanka. According to statistics, the literacy rate in Rwanda is 70.5%. Poverty is the main challenge; both of these countries face hundreds of years of working to achieve their educational goals. Sri Lanka and Rwanda have acquired remarkable achievements in the field of education, the massive effort taken by the two governments in poverty reduction during last two decades.

Both countries have paid attention to the Human Development Index measures in three basic dimensions: health, education and living standard, since a single indicator such as "income" is not sufficient to capture the true experience of poverty. Hence, in this paper, our main objective is to examine how poverty reduction process in the Sri Lankan and Rwandan governments have affected their educational progress in the last two decades. Secondary data was used as the main source for analysing information. Mainly reports made by governmental departments, research papers published in international journals, and papers presented at international conferences have been used as the sources of data.

The remaining part of the study is structured as follows. Section two concerns with a brief overview of the literature. Section three presents the education system in Rwanda while section four describes the educational Organization in Sri Lanka. Section five and six summarizes briefly a linkage of poverty to education in both countries (Rwanda and Sri Lanka). Section seven presents the methodology used in the study. Section eight describes the results and discussions and finally deals with the conclusion of the study.

2. Literature review

Poverty is defined as "lack of access to crucial social services, more importantly like education, health and adequate food, shelter and other basic needs in life" (OECD, 2013). Most people who are poor depend on subsistence agriculture and live in remote rural areas. The number of the world population which suffers from extreme poverty is about 1.4 billion and 70% of them are living in rural areas (IFAD, 2010).

Opschoor, (2007) explains poverty as an outcome of social competition among individuals, social clusters, and countries for the sake of wealth and power. Poverty can also be defined as the deprivation of human capabilities including long life expectancy, general knowledge and economic viability in the society (Nunan et al., 2002). According to Edward et al., (2009), poverty is lack of human, social, natural, physical, and financial assets essential to ensure the human well-being. Poverty can be regarded as personal deficits and social disadvantages from basic resources in the society (Islam, 2005).

While education is the enlargement of individual basing to his/her desires and demands of the community

where he lives. It is a process of the coaching and training of the kid. This is about conveying skills and gaining of knowledge in specific field which could enable the learner to apply those new skills (Kellerman, 1980). Education is considered as a powerful tool for development of human being and community as well (Eka, 1996). According to Oghuvbu (2007), education is highlighted as an authentic process of conveying and revolutionizing culture, via the official or unofficial teaching of the population in the community. Education is essential in safeguarding reasonable and sustainable progress and a decrease of poverty in rural areas (WHO, 2010).

Thus, the level of poverty in rural areas is high compared to urban and result from a low average of education attendance (Perry et al., 2006). Poverty and education are closely contrariwise interconnect concept, whereby the improvement in human wealth affect positively the investment in children education by their parents (Masood et al., 2011). The relationship between poverty and education can be agreed in different ways for insistence investment in education considered as poverty decrease approach in a way that can increase the expertise and production opportunities among poor people; poverty as a challenge to education attainment at the household level as well as country-wide level (Oxaal, 1997). For the poor households who have the land to cultivate or other business to do instead of employing external workers retain their children at home (Basu & Zafiris, 2003). In this regard, poverty and scarcity of economic means are observed as impediments to education training and continuing attendance more specifically in rural and some part of urban areas. According to Filmer (2000), it is highlighted that poverty is closely linked with low educational achievements, gaps in areas of education (Rural and urban) and also gender gaps in schooling. The UNESCO, (2008) showed that poor people are not able to get access to a suitable instruction which is a constraint for them to continue living in poverty. The rural population is more affected by poverty compared to urban people.

However, Poverty reduction has a positive feedback on the system and results in higher education and in rural areas in particular. As highlighted by Chowd Hury & Ahmed (2015), poverty reduction in rural areas refers to the implementation of different programs, policies, and strategies to decrease the number of people living in poverty. Rural areas are extremely down-graded with lack of development infrastructure and other basic needs such as education, potable water, electricity and other facilities. The most of country poverty reduction strategic policies are emphasizing on rural area development due to the greatest number of poor people who live there and also mostly depend on subsistence agriculture, especially; strategies respond to the problem of education between different categories of population such as children, youth, and adults (Aref & Aref, 2012).

According to UNESCO (2002), education in rural areas is very vital for quickly arriving at the sustainable development of a country. By focusing on a poverty reduction agenda, specifically in rural areas, education was emphasized and now the achievements are visible in most parts of the world. It is visible that improvement of education in rural areas back and maintain a local culture, institutions, knowledge, and skills that enable rural areas to track continued development (Aref, 2011). Among the key priorities for country's development should be a focus on education sector (UNESCO, 2005). A more illiterate population delays the economy and social development of a country. This is a big challenge in rural areas where education sector is still very low compared to the urban areas, due to low income, lack of infrastructure, as well as low qualified staff. The implementation of poverty reduction programs have been impacting positively a reduction of poverty in rural areas and the outcomes are visible, specifically in education. Nowadays, education is playing an important role in the increase of agriculture production, which is now based on skill -full personnel in different countries.

3. Education System in Rwanda

As other sectors after the 1994 Tutsi genocide, education sector went through an emergency stage where the major concern was to redefine and restart the education system which was destroyed. Since 1998, education policies like education for all, free education in primary school and 12 years basic education and a defined new orientation and structure of education was implemented and put in place. The education system was developed in line with the vision of the country's poverty reduction and socio-economic sphere (MINEDUC, 2003). The education system is structured as preschool education, primary education, secondary school education and tertiary education. The preschool education is reserved for young children of 2 - 6 years and it contributes to the student's school familiarization and development of basic skills that lay the foundation for learning in primary school education. After completion of primary education, students sit for a national examination that determines eligibility for lower secondary school education that is usually children from age 13-18. The lower secondary education offers a general education that prepares students for being admitted to upper secondary school after passing the national examination in the 3rd year. After completion of senior secondary school, students who pass a national examination continue further education, such as the university or vocational training. The Rwandan government introduced a free education system for its primary education in 2003.

Later, twelve years basic education was established as an extension of the free primary education program by the Rwandan government in 2012 (JICA, 2012).

The education system in Rwanda is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for developing policies, strategies, and national programs. The Ministry has key bodies such as the

Rwanda Education Board, which is in charge of quality improvement in primary and secondary school, and also the Higher Education Council, which is responsible for quality, structure, and performance of all high learning education in the country (MINEDUC, 2015).

4. Educational Organization in Sri Lanka

Educational systems in Sri Lanka operate under two major categories: general and tertiary. General education is comprised of three sections: primary level, secondary level, and College level. Primary education in Sri Lanka is operated from grade 1-5 while a secondary level is operated from grade 6-11. Secondary level education in Sri Lanka is subdivided into junior secondary (from grade 6 to 8) and senior secondary (from grade 9 to 11). At the end of the secondary level, all the students sit for a public examination called the General Certificate of Education. Everyone who wants to enter Advanced Level classes or college education should pass at least six subjects, including their mother tongue and mathematics with three credits from the above-mentioned examination. The college education is conducted under three streams: Art, Science, and Commerce from grade 12-13. These students belong to age 17-18. Presently, there are more than 450,000 in the student populations who learn in 10,763 schools in the educational system in Sri Lanka. From these students, 9,931 students learn in public schools while the rest of the student population learns in 99 private schools and 734 private where Buddhist monks study. Also, there is a new set of private schools about 200-250, which offer foreign curricular and prepare students for international examinations (World Bank, 2011). Tertiary level education takes place mainly at universities, technical institutes, colleges of education, and vocational education and training institutions. While the National Education Commission (NEC) and the Ministry of Education are responsible for the overall education policy in Sri Lanka, the National Institute of Education (NIE) is responsible for curriculum development, teacher training, and research in education. Education is state-funded and provided free of charge at all levels, including the university education.

5. Linking Poverty to Education in Rwanda

The Government of Rwanda is achieving considerable progress in the poverty reduction process with different initiatives to address this issue in profound ways. Regardless of the progress in economic growth over the past two decades, the country remains among the poorer in the world, with a rate of 39.1% of the population living below the national poverty line. Around 85 % of the Rwandan population live in rural areas and depend on traditional agriculture (RLDSF, 2012). In addition, rapid population growth is also a major challenge faced by the Rwandan government in its development process (NISR and MINECOFIN, 2012). Poverty in Rwanda is both pervasive and long-standing.

Moreover, poverty still is a challenge to children's education, whereby a number of children are not attending schools due to the low income of their families. The poor families that are not educated keep their children at home and employ them in their domestic activities instead of getting external workers (Nkurunziza et al., 2012). The low level of the parents' education is a challenge affecting their living standards. Therefore, in this perspective, poverty and low economic means are viewed as a constraint to students' education in both rural and urban areas. According to the UNESCO report (2011), the children who fail to finish their studies come from poor families and live in rural areas and some part of urban areas.

The International Labour Organisation (2005) shows that children spend more time in doing job generating income than going to school. The same report highlighted that the children are mostly involved in working on tea plantations or in making bricks for construction instead of attending school. (Rwanda counts around 400,000 child workers who are involved in domestic activities and other low forms of child employment).

The school dropouts remain significant and persistent, whereby 14.3% dropped their primary studies in 2014 compared to 11.4 percent in 2010 (Safari, 2016). Also, the dropout rate in secondary reached to 14.7 percent in 2013 in low secondary school and 6.2 percent in upper secondary education.

There are various reasons for this dropout rate; some are linked with poor health or malnutrition and others are related to the children's family economic condition. More frequently, poverty acts to negatively influence the demand for education, due to lack of school materials and other needs that cost for children's education (Ricardo & Kwame, 2010).

Moreover, the infrastructure facilities for some schools are not in good conditions for facilitating a positive teaching environment. According to the Education Statistics Yearbook, some schools do not have electricity, access to water facilities, and have a shortage of toilet facilities (MINEDUC, 2016). This situation contributed to the non-participation of students, especially girls who have reached the age of puberty (Imtiaz, 2016). The quality of education is also problematic due to lack of qualified teachers, no science laboratories, lack of proper buildings and the long distances for students to reach schools.

However, the government has recognized the importance of education by providing free education and other facilities, such as textbooks, meals to some students in some areas that guardians are unable to provide, but still means are not enough.

6. Linking Poverty to Education in Sri Lanka

Considerable numbers of children in both urban and rural areas in Sri Lanka belong to the disadvantaged student community since they are below the national poverty line. This situation can be seen since the nation's independence in 1948 and the major reason for this poverty situation is low income. Lack of educational attainment of the elderly people of some urban and village areas has negatively affected the present living standards of those people (Prathapage, 2006). But a report by the Asian Development Bank (2011) says that poverty in rural areas has declined considerably from 29.5 to 9.4 percent in the last decade.

A research conducted by UNESCO (2001) reveals that most of the children who fail to complete schooling are mainly from poor and marginalized houses from urban areas, village areas, and the state sector. According to UNICEF (2013), one of the highest rates of dropouts can be seen in the plantation, schools whilst richer areas have lower rates of dropouts. An estimated 5% of the total population in Sri Lanka belong to the state sector, where tea and rubber plantations have become the major economy. As it is shown by a researcher (2007), only 58% of children from the state sector attend schools up to completion of primary education. From this 58 %, only 7% pass the GCE (O/L) and proceed to advanced level classes. From them, less than 1% of the students enter universities after completing the college education. The reasons for this dropout rate are a culmination of extreme poverty, lack of awareness on to the importance of education and lack of parental motivation. Infrastructure facilities of some schools are not in a good condition to retain students in the school environment. According to a research conducted by UNICEF, nearly 43% of school children have access to water from a well, 20% have tap water and 17% have no water facilities. The Health and Nutrition Branch of the Education Ministry shows that around 20 percent of school toilets are in need of repair before they could be used. This condition has contributed to the non-participation of students, especially girls who have reached the age of puberty (Imtiaz, 2016). Lack of qualified teachers, science laboratories, proper buildings, and playgrounds are some of the major problems faced by the public schools, including Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka, due to economic difficulties faced by the government (Wijewardane & Amaranath, 2009).

The census and statistical analysis presented in 1999 reveals that 21% of Sri Lankan children between the ages of 5-17 engaged in some form of economic activity. It is revealed in another research that 25,333 children in the age of 5-14 have been doing economic activities without engaging in education (IPEC, 2001-2002). The ILO/ IPEC study (2004) has revealed that there were 19,100 domestic workers in the northern and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka. This research further explains that 605 of these child laborers work in the agricultural sector in Sri Lanka. Most of these domestic child laborers are from rural areas, plantations and city slums (Kannangara et al., 2003). However, Sri Lanka is a signatory to a number of international conventions which address child laborers like the Convention on the Right of Child (CRC) in 1991 and the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict in 2002. It is also part to the ILO Convention on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment. Though the government is providing free education with some facilities, like textbooks, clothes for uniforms to all students and, meals for some students, in some areas parents or guardians are unable to provide extra essentials such as exercise books, traveling costs and meals for satisfying the needs of children in vulnerable families. In one research, it is shown that health, nutrition and lack of parent's education have become major factors for child education. However, it is clear that education is a good passport to any children to move from one generation to another which is free from poverty. Child labor, which demonstrates multiple deprivations such as overwork, little leisure, denied education, bad working condition, sexual harassment, and low wages, have influence in many ways for limiting child education due to poverty.

7. Methodology of Research

The present study has used secondary data from world development indicator of World Bank and other data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda and the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Education and Cultural Affairs Sri Lanka. The variables influencing education such as enrolment, government expenditure on education and education facilities were selected and assessed. The data were analysed quantitatively by using descriptive statistics. The results are presented in tables and figures.

8. Results and Discussion

Table1. Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)

*Rwanda		**Sri Lanka	
Year	% Poverty	Year	% Poverty
2000/1	60.4	2002	22.7
2005/6	56.9	2006/7	15.2
2010/11	46	2009	8.9
2013/14	39.1	2012	6.7

Sources: *Enquete Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages de Rwanda (EICV 1,2,3,4)

** Poverty and Human Development in Sri Lanka by Asian Development Bank (2009)

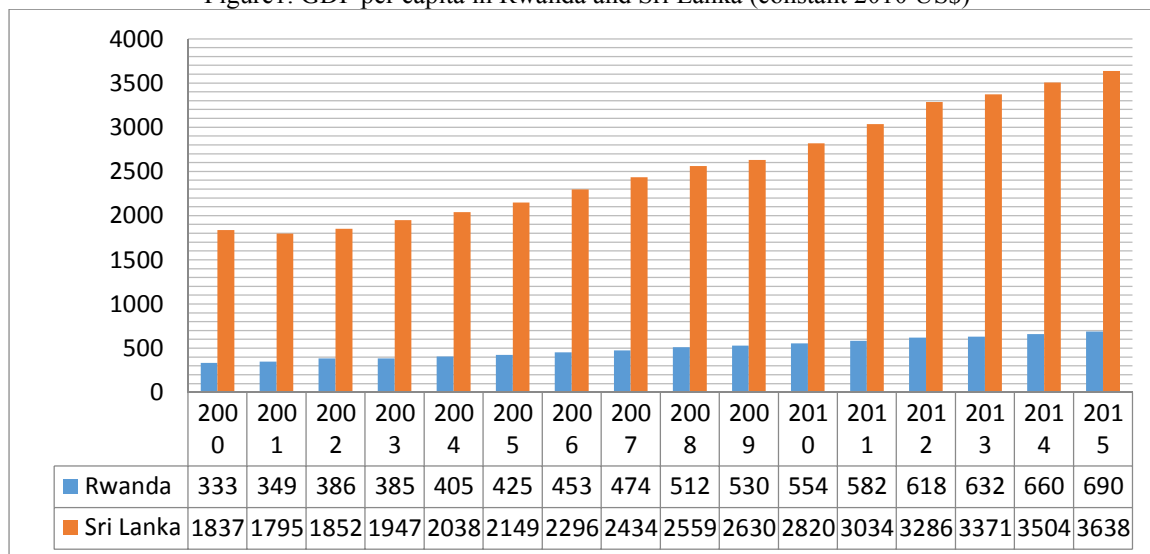
** World Bank dataset on World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2017)

Table 1 above, shows the progress of poverty reduction in Rwanda and Sri Lanka. As it is shown in table 1, the population living below the national poverty line was estimated at 60.4% of the total population in 2000/2001. Thereafter, the government of Rwanda implemented different policies in line with poverty reduction and its result was visible as highlighted by the reduction in poverty which reached 56.9% of people living below the national poverty line in 2005/2006. Nevertheless, poverty continued to decrease slightly due to the government's committed effort, whereby it reduced from 46 to 39.1% of the population living below national poverty line respectively in 2010/2011 and 2013/2014. Poverty reduction came to the top of the government's priority, whereby the strategies focusing on socioeconomic development and poverty reduction was implemented since 2000. The main target of those programs was to transform the country's economy from a low income to a middle-income country by 2020 (MINECOFIN, 2000). The percentage evaluation of MDGs has shown that Rwanda has made a fruitful story in poverty reduction in having lowered the proportion of the people who live below the poverty line (Government of Rwanda, 2014).

The government of Sri Lanka also has displayed a high commitment to poverty reduction in one way for achieving their development level. About 22.7% of the total population, who were living below the poverty line in Sri Lanka in 2002, with the implementation of government policies and programs for poverty reduction in 2006/2007, poverty reduced up to 15.2% of the total population below the poverty line. Subsequently, poverty was highly reduced from 8.9 to 6.7% of the total population under poverty line from 2009 to 2012. The main factors that backed poverty reduction in Sri Lanka are mainly related to high rate of job creation in both the state and private sectors (World Bank, 2013). The structural transformation and upsurge in agglomeration have contributed to the sustainable approach of poverty reduction in upcoming periods in Sri Lanka.

Generally, both Rwanda and Sri Lanka have made considerable progress in poverty reduction and if continued, it will help them to achieve a great sustainable development.

Figure1. GDP per capita in Rwanda and Sri Lanka (constant 2010 US\$)



Source: (World Bank, 2017)

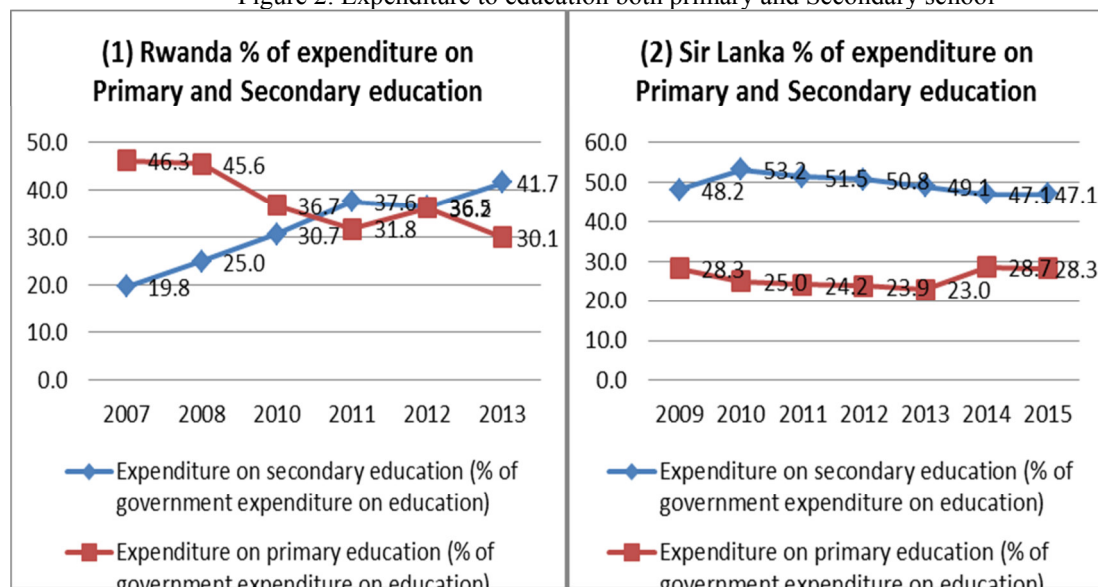
Figure 1 above, shows the GDP per capita of both Rwanda and Sri Lanka. GDP is among the key indicators highlighting the country's good economic performance. Therefore, as it is shown within the figure, Rwanda is a low-income country marked with a very impressive progress of increased GDP per capita; whereby it was 333

USD GDP per capita in 2000, it continued to increase up to 690 USD in 2015. Therefore, this increase of GDP per capita is a signal of progress in the production of goods and service resulting from the effort of the population through government support in different domains. The improvement in agriculture and service had increased its contribution about 47 percent of the GDP (NISR, 2015). Furthermore, the creation of non-farming activities and assistance of getting fertilizer and seeds in agriculture contributed to the increase of agriculture production, which supports 72% of the total population. Moreover, the living standards of Rwandan population have slightly increased whereby nowadays people are able to access health care, basic education and other minimum necessities.

Sri Lanka is a middle-income country which shows a rapid increase in the GDP per capita as indicated in figure 1 above. The GDP per capita of Sri Lanka was 1,837 USD in 2000 and continued to increase up to 3,638 USD in 2015, which was all most double compared to 2000. Nevertheless, the result shows the exception of a decrease of GDP per capita to 1,795 USD in 2001. Some of the reasons of economic failure during 2001 were about the sequence of global and domestic economic problems that were accompanied by the terrorist attacks. After the 2001 economics shock, the next period of 2002 was marked by an upright economic performance of 6.2 % of average in the GDP per capita.

Moreover, the increase of the GDP per capita resulted from government commitments that brought the benefits to the population and the economy in general. Additionally, new jobs were created and unemployment decreased to 7.7% in 2005 and the GDP per capita increased compared to other South Asian economies (Duma, 2007).

Figure 2. Expenditure to education both primary and Secondary school



Source: (World Bank, 2017)

The results shown in figure 2 above highlight the percentage of expenditures for both primary and secondary education in Rwanda. The red line indicates the total percentage of the budget spent on primary education by the government via the Ministry of Education. The Ministry used 46.3% of the total budget of the Ministry on primary education in 2007 and that was decreased to 45.6% of the total budget in 2008. The results also indicate gradual decreases from 2010 to 2013. The decrease of the budget which the government spent on primary education through the Ministry of Education was due to direct finances from partners (JICA, 2012) and also the involvement of the private investor.

For secondary schools, the government of Rwanda spent 19.8 % of the total Ministry budget in 2007, which was low compared to the primary education budget. The reason was scarce resources and the government made more of a priority of universal primary education compared to other education cycles. Thereafter, the budget spent on secondary school increased gradually year by year, whereby in 2008, it reached 25.0% of the total ministry budget and it continued to increase to 41.7% in 2013. The government gradually increased budget spent on secondary school education due to a limited number of investors.

In the same perspective, the government of Sri Lanka also spent more on both primary and secondary education. The total government expenditure spent on the secondary schools was 48.2% of the expenditures on education in 2009 and the expenditure was increased to 53.2% of the education budget in 2010. Therefore, this highlighted the effort the government of Sri Lanka put on education.

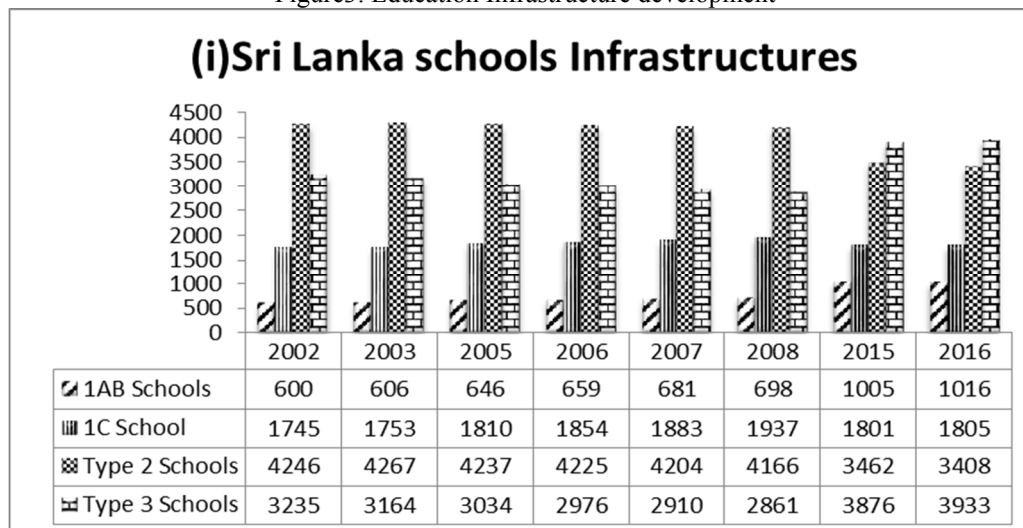
Thereafter, the government budget injected in secondary education reduced progressively from 2011 up to 2015, as indicated in figure 2, mainly due to the involvement of partners and private investors.

For primary school, the government expenditure was gradually decreased over time, whereby it was estimated at 28.3% of government expenditure on education in 2009. It was continued to decrease as indicated by 25.0%, 24.2%, 23.9% and 23.0% of total government expenditures on education respectively in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013

However, education is a moderately important progress for making a straightforward foundation on socio-economic development (Turkkahraman, 2012). Both countries (Rwanda and Sri Lanka) are focusing on increasing production but are challenged by lack of qualified human resources. To respond to the needs, the government put more attention in education investment.

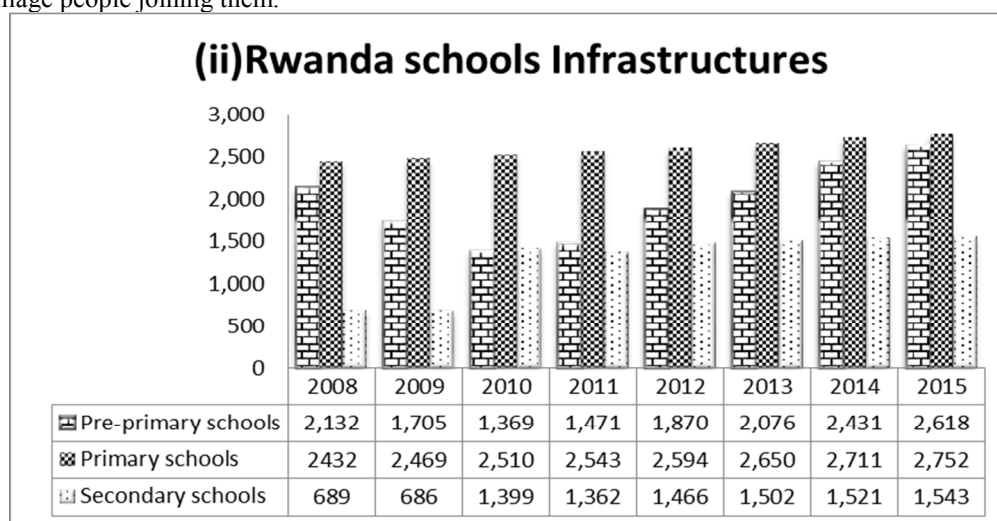
Noticeably, education represents one of the main important contributions to the increase of a country's production and export and is a significant ingredient for getting effective technology from abroad (Ozturk, 2001).

Figure3. Education Infrastructure development



Source: Ministry of Human Resources Development, Education, and Cultural Affairs Sri Lanka

Figure 3 (i) above indicated the situation of school infrastructure in Sri Lanka. As it is highlighted for 1AB School, the infrastructure slightly increased from 600 to 1016 schools respectively from 2002 to 2016. This indicates that the government of Sri Lanka is putting more effort on education. For the 1C school type, also infrastructure increased over time from 1745 to 4237 schools from 2002 to 2005 and after that period the school infrastructure was reduced, as it observed above in figure 3(i). For the type 2 schools and type 3 schools, the number of schools were many from 2002 and were gradual decreased over time. The reason for this decrease was the tendency which could be seen among village people to move from village schools to urban schools for better educational opportunities. But with the introduction of a new concept by the present government that “the best school is the nearest school,” there was certain increase regarding type 2 and type 3 schools again in the last two years. Under this new concept, these type 2 and 3 schools were facilitated by Sri Lanka government to attract village people joining them.

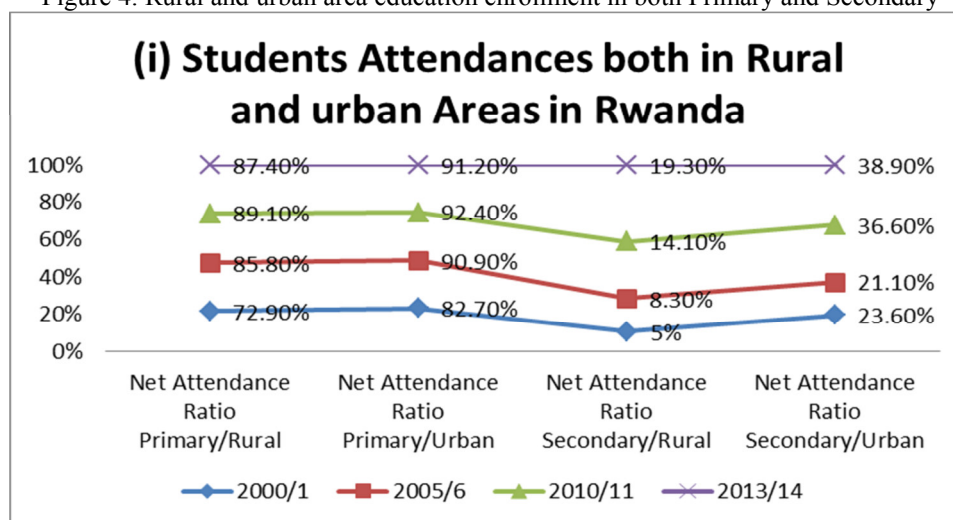


Source: MINEDUC, 2016

Figure 3 (ii) above indicated the school infrastructure in Rwanda; it showed that the infrastructures are

increasing over time. For pre-primary schools, the infrastructures were 2,132 schools in 2008. The pre-primary contributed to student school familiarization and development of basic skills, which gives them a foundation for learning primary school education. From 2009 to 2011, the pre-primary school infrastructures decreased, due to the fact that some schools were transformed into primary schools. Therefore, with the continued intervention of government, the pre-primary schools again increased from 1,870 to 2,618 respectively from 2012 to 2015. For other types of school, such primary and secondary schools, the infrastructures increased over time from 2008 to 2015. The rate of student attendance increased due to the free education system in primary and 3 years of basic education. More importantly, the evaluation of MDGs highlighted that the universal primary education achieved 100% primary rate of enrolment, according to the cited target (Government of Rwanda, 2014).

Figure 4. Rural and urban area education enrollment in both Primary and Secondary



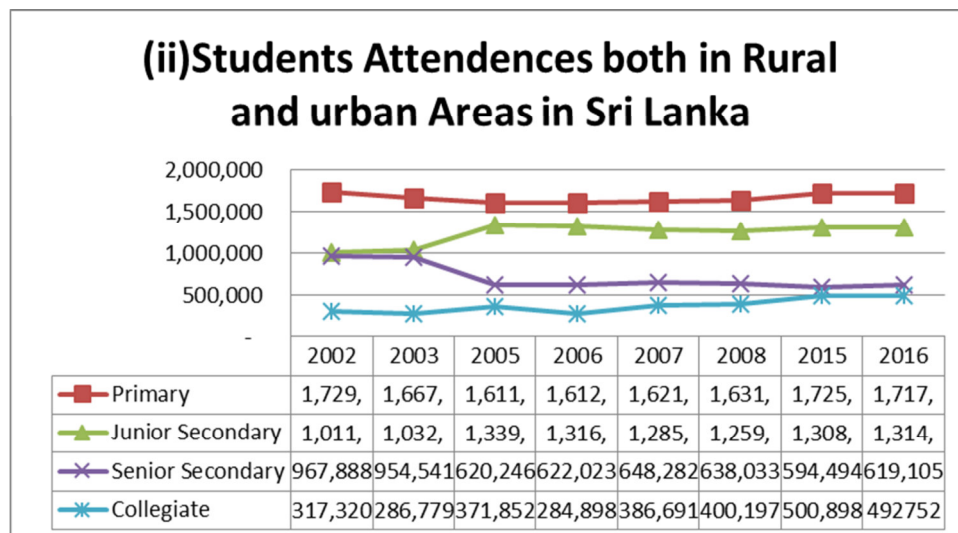
Source: computer from NISR: EICV1, EICV2, EICV3, EICV 4

Figure 4(i) above shows students' attendances in rural compared to urban areas. The rural primary school attendance increased progressively from 72.9% of rural area school-aged children in 2000/2001 to 85.80% of rural area school-aged children in 2005/2006. The students' attendance also continued to increase from 89.10% of rural area school-aged children in 2010/2011 to a small decrease of 87.4% of rural area school-aged children in 2013/2014. This shows the effort of the government of Rwanda in improving education in rural areas.

On the other hand, the attendance of primary education in urban areas is higher compared to rural areas as indicated by figure 4 above. The urban areas primary school attendances increased progressively from 82.70% to 90.90% of urban area school-aged children respectively in 2000/2001 and 2005/2006. The attendance also continued to increase to 92.40% of urban area school-aged children in 2010/2011 against a small decrease to 91.20% of urban area school-aged children in 2013/2014.

For secondary school attendances, the rural areas' attendance improved from 5% in 2000/1 to 8.3% in 2005/6 and continued to increase from 14.10% to 19.30% respectively in 2010/11 and 2013/14 but still, improvement is very low compared to the urban area. The main reason of the limited number of rural students in secondary schools is due to the job search in an urban area after finishing primary school, lack of school fees and helping their parents in agricultural activities. The attendance of secondary school in the urban area progressively increased to 36.60% in 2000/2001 versus a decrease in attendance to 21.10% in 2005/2006. However, the urban area students' attendance increased from 36.60 to 38.90 % respectively in 2010/2011 and 2013/2014.

More generally, the secondary school attendance is low due to lack of school fees and dropouts of students who went for early informal work.



Sources: Ministry of Human Resources Development, Education, and Cultural Affairs Sri Lanka

Figure 4(ii) above highlights the school attendance in Sri Lanka both in rural and urban areas in different school categories. The primary school attendance was 1.7 million students attending primary education in 2002 while in 2003 to 2008 the attendance gradually decreased as indicated by the figure above; the decrease was due to the reduction in the fertility rate. The MDGs evaluation report showed that the Sri Lanka government achieved almost 100% of universal primary education (United Nations, 2015).

For junior secondary school, as highlighted by figure 4 above, the attendance was positively increased in different years from 2002 to 2016 but in the middle, there is a decrease in school attendance from 2007 to 2008. The decrease was mainly due to increased high dropouts and early informal employment. Lastly, the senior secondary school and collegiate attendance had reduced compared to the other levels (primary and junior secondary school) as indicated by the above figure; the main reason behind the decrease was those students who finished the lower level and went to look for jobs or to help their parents in agriculture activities.

9. Conclusion

Rwanda and Sri Lanka are two countries located on two different continents and their developmental levels are not the same. Sri Lanka is a middle-income country while Rwanda is a low-income country. But, poverty is a common challenge for these two countries and it has adversely affected these countries' education over years. Therefore, the present study analyses the impact of poverty reduction on education in Rwanda and Sri Lanka. The data used in this study were obtained from world development indicators of World Bank, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda and Ministry of Human Resources Development, Education and Cultural Affairs Sri Lanka.

The study result revealed that poverty has been considerably reduced in both countries. The achievement in poverty reduction was the outcome of the implemented programs targeting poverty reduction in both governments. The findings showed that GDP per capita was gradually increased in both countries and the living standards of the populations were improved. This implies that the purchasing power of the population has been increased over time, and resulted in a positive impact on access to education in both rural and urban areas compared to before. The other evident observation shows that the increase in the chance of getting out from poverty been increasing the education attendance in both rural and urban areas. Significantly, the school development infrastructure has been increased in both rural and urban areas and also the rate of students' enrolments has been slightly improved considerably over time. Nonetheless, still, there are some challenges which need to be addressed for establishing a high-quality education like providing facilities for transport, electricity, sanitary etc. should be strengthened further in some schools where they are needed. Introduction of new technology is a need of modern education without regional differences instead of outdated technology.

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